

Launch of WEHC's 9,000 Watt Station

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Emory, Virginia

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October 26, 2009

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I am pleased to return to Emory and Henry College today to mark a major milestone in our efforts to expand the public radio offerings in Southwest Virginia. Today, Emory and Henry's radio station, WEHC, will increase its power from a 500 watt station to a 9,000 watt station.

This increase in power will greatly expand the radio station's coverage area. Beginning today, WEHC can be heard as far north as Richlands, as far south as Mountain City, Tennessee, as far West as Blountville, Tennessee and as far as Rural Retreat to the east.

Previously, Emory and Henry's radio station was only available to residents within a short distance of the campus. Two years ago, I joined with Dr. Reichard in announcing an increase of transmission power for WEHC to 500 watts. At the time of that announcement, Emory

and Henry College had just submitted an application to the Federal Communications Commission to expand its transmission power, which was subsequently approved.

Last year, I joined with Dr. Reichard and many of you here today again to announce that, at my urging, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration of the U. S. Department of Commerce, awarded a grant of \$187,932, to Emory and Henry College for the construction of radio facilities which will allow WEHC to expand its coverage area.

With the benefit of the federal funds, the College has constructed a 197 foot tower and installed a new transmitter and antenna on the tower. In addition to the federal funding, the Virginia Tobacco Commission has provided \$93,000 to help Emory and Henry purchase studio equipment as well as to help provide training to students, faculty and community members in audio skills, which will prepare these individuals for work in radio and in the broader communications industry.

Beginning today, area listeners who enjoy commercial-free radio will have access to a wide variety of local programming and community information, in addition to the retransmission of Radio IQ through the College's arrangement with WVTF at Virginia Tech. These programs have been available to listeners within an eight mile radius of the College's 500 watt transmitter for the past two years. With the increase in the station's power to 9,000 watts, WEHC will be able to provide its programming to a much wider audience throughout Southwest Virginia.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to commend the outstanding work of Dr. Rosalind Reichard, President of Emory and Henry College. In the three years that Roz has been at the helm at Emory and Henry she has provided an energetic vision that inspires the faculty and staff to achieve what they dream.

I would like to recognize Teresa Keller, Director of the Communications Department, who has spearheaded this project from its inception. I have known Teresa for a number of years and have been impressed with her commitment to community service and quality higher education. Teresa recognizes that a community is enriched by the sharing of ideas, by the local musical culture, and by the educational development of our future workforce.

All of these pieces are brought together through WEHC.

Many more people will have the opportunity to appreciate our rich cultural heritage as displayed on the radio station as a result of Teresa's hard work.

I would also like to thank Glenn Gleixner, station manager of WVTF. The partnership with WVTF has been instrumental in achieving the increased power at WEHC which we celebrate today.

I also want to thank the Virginia Tobacco Commission for its support of WEHC. Delegate Joe Johnson is with us today, and he deserves our thanks for the role he played in securing the Tobacco Commission funds.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to the listeners and supporters of WEHC. The federal grant requires a significant local match, and with the aid of many listeners making private donations, Emory and Henry is close to meeting this matching requirement.

The expansion of WEHC's coverage area is an outstanding achievement, and I congratulate all who will benefit from the public radio programming now available to a wide audience of listeners of WEHC throughout our region.